

THE
CONJUGAL
DIRECTORY.

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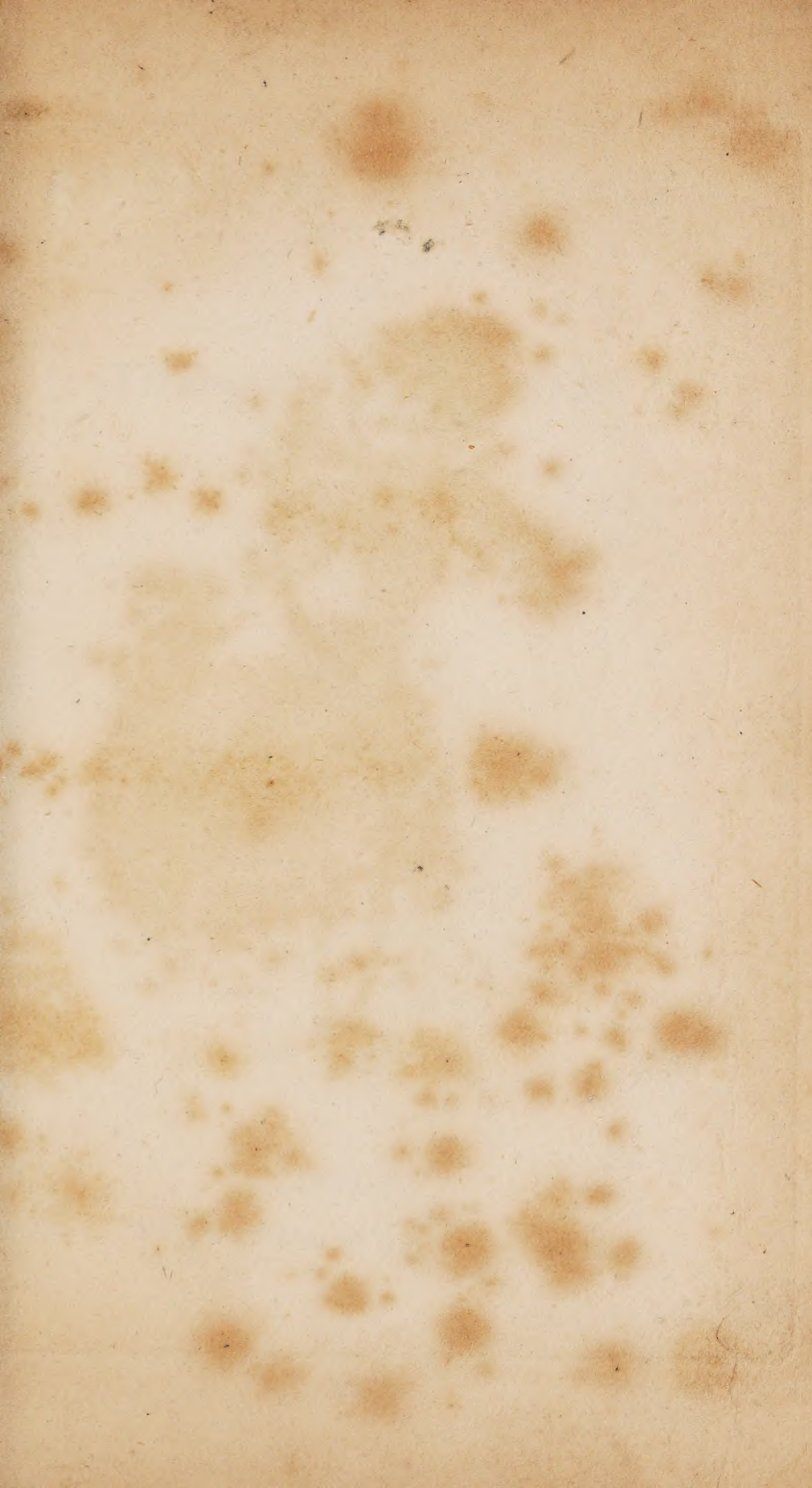


J. Mouton
1904

The Censure

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THE
CONJUGAL DIRECTORY ;

OR
THE JOYS OF HYMEN.

A Poem ;
IN THREE BOOKS.

Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings.

Milton.

LONDON :
JOHN LOWNDES, SOUTH-SIDE, DRURY-LANE THEATRE.

351093



LONDON:

P R E F A C E.

THE following Poem is presented to the Reader as an agreeable amusement for a leisure hour, and recommended to him as an antidote against melancholy, when spleen and blood ill-tempered vexeth him.

I might here observe, that my subject is one of the most noble which could possibly be chosen; but I waive the claim, as being sensible that the original of Quilletus, of which, this piece is freely acknowledged to be a close imitation, bears away the glory which can arise from such a consideration; but yet it is probable that the piece (as it now stands) will not fail to afford sufficient entertainment to the curious and intelligent Reader. If it yield instruction also, the end of the Editor will be yet more fully answered.

Nothing could be more adapted to the beauties of poetry and harmony of measure than this subject, as it naturally admits of all the flights of fancy, all the flowers of language which can charm the ear, or captivate the heart;—how far I have availed myself of that capacity of pleasing in the conduct of the piece, must be left to the judgment of the public to determine.

The division of the Poem into books, which

was originally thought necessary, for the sake of method and perspicuity, has been carefully preserved ; thought it was judged proper to omit the fourth and last, as being for the most part, foreign to our purpose, consisting chiefly of divers characters and descriptions of countries, men, and manners ; which must for ever vary, according to people's different prejudices, and the age and clime they live in.

Before I dismiss this subject, I cannot help taking notice of the great similarity there is between the style and manner of Quilletus and that of Ovid ; and I have rather endeavoured in this piece, to improve than to efface the likeness.—The Roman Poet has ever been read with pleasure ;—if he has his faults and redundancies, yet there are so many beauties to be found in his writings, as make us ready at once to forgive and admire him :—and there could not be a better pattern, to follow in a performance of this nature, than such a votary of love and friend to the fair-sex as that renowned Author.

Like his, the descriptions here are lively, the pictures warm and animated ; and, though sometimes they reveal the more enchanting charms of Nature, and unveil her beauties ; yet care has been taken, that she shall by no means be stripped and exposed naked to the view, like a common prostitute ; the former method of proceeding, being highly innocent and delightful, as the latter is equally indecent and disgusting.

The episodes, which are scattered through the Work, contribute not a little to enliven it, and to relieve the mind from a fixed attention to

the subject, thereby agreeably diverting the fancy, and embellishing the Poem with the added beauty of variety. With these, it is not likely that the judicious Reader should be displeased. Such digressions can demand no apology; but to have omitted them, might have been justly esteemed a blemish, which no refinement in criticism could be sufficient to excuse.

We are well aware that the astrological directions, contained in the Second Book, will fall under the censure of some; yet such cannot but confess that, at least, they are ingeniously imagined; and when they farther consider how greatly these notions have prevailed in former ages, and how many there are who still adopt them, I flatter myself I shall be justified in not suppressing them; which, indeed, had it been done, would have broken in upon the regularity of the piece; and the more so, as their place could not easily have been supplied with any thing so naturally introduced, or so well connected with the subject as they appear to be. The same apology may likewise serve for some other maxims here laid down, which have, perhaps, in a series of time, lost much of their credit with the world, though it is likely they will never be entirely exploded, while Fancy has so great a share in determining the opinions of men, and an affectation of particularity, so much influence over their judgment.

The rules, however, which are laid down in regard of that important matter, the propagation of our species, are, in general, such as certainly deserve a serious attention; and the transgression

of them may be presumed to have been often attended with such bad consequences as must necessarily prove very disagreeable. In particular, the moderation here recommended, and the modest use even of the marriage-bed itself, may be numbered amongst the most excellent pieces of physical advice ever given to young people, whose warm passions are too apt to transport them beyond the bounds of reason, and to make them forget what they owe to themselves and to their future offspring. Cares like these are well worthy of the philosopher and the friend of humankind; and the charge can never come better recommended than in harmonious numbers, which please while they instruct, and lead us, as it were, by a sweet enchantment to those useful pieces of knowledge which, in dry treatises of physics or morality, might, perhaps, have lain by for whole years unread and unnoticed by those very persons whom they most concern, the inexperienced youth of both sexes, to whose use likewise they are remarkably well adapted, and for whose perusal they were chiefly collected, at first, into a body, and committed to the press.

Doubtless, some grave one will assert, that pieces like these are improper to be entrusted in the hands of young people as being likely to excite in them those very passions which they profess to restrain. But I must take the liberty of dissenting from them in this particular; since the whole conduct of this work, is evidently calculated for a different purpose, and is highly useful in giving such lessons of moderation and virtue, as the severest lecturers need not be ashamed to

own; far unlike to those more serious books, which under the notion of science have really corrupted our youth, and are by so much the more dangerous for the gravity which they assume, and the air of instruction which they put on, while they are filled with nothing but lewdness and vile abominations.

It will be needless to add any thing farther on this head, or to say more in favour of the piece, which at last must speak for itself. To the candour of the public I commit it, little doubting but if (like the original of Quilletus) it be found worthy of their attention, its success will be equal to its merit.

THE CONJUGAL DIRECTORY.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Invocation. Difference of Beauties. Account of the Golden Age. The Story of Pandora. The Sick and weak advised to refrain from the Rites of Venus. The bad Effects of Marrying for Riches. Description of ill-matched Pairs. The Muse's Apology, and Promise of future Instruction,

I SING the raptures of the Marriage-Bed,
Whence beauteous youths and charming nymphs
are bred ;
The power of planets o'er the mother's mind,
What makes love's essence gross, and what refin'd ;
How seeds, in mingling rush, without controul,
And form the mind with equal flow of soul ;
Aid me, ye graces ! to pursue the song,
And Venus, goddess of the blissful throng !
To whom, on Ida's hill, the princely boy
Adjudged the prize which wrought the fate of Troy :
Grant me one glance of those all-charming eyes,
That I with Cyprian lays may bear the prize !

Let no uncomely deity appear,
To shock the sight, or grate upon the ear ;
But every verse with elegance and ease,
Be strong, though flowing, and, whilst useful, pleases :
Let crowding beauties in my numbers shine,
And like the subject, mark the verse divine.
My precepts bridegrooms to their brides shall teach,
And sweetly practise, what I softly preach.
Perhaps, a nobler breed shall bless the earth,
And every womb produce a lovely birth ;
No more shall Hymen think all beauty flown,
Nor Venus every teeming fair disown.
Let those who love the war, first learn to fight,
And then they'll know to use their arms aright ;
If thus my labour should enhance the bliss,
Let me, ye fair, while living, freely kiss ;
When dead, ye lovers ! consecrate my name,
Take my instructions, and return me fame.
Now, Muse ! an arduous task demands thy voice,
To sing true beauty, and peculiar choice :
What colour'd hair is best the head to deck,
Or flows attractive on the lovely neck ;
What roses on the cheeks enchanting glow,
What graces snow-white lilies can bestow ;
What shape the lover's arms with rapture fills,
And from what lips the sweetest balm distils.
The difficulty of the task I see,
Since scarce two lovers in their choice agree ;
For fair Emilia, Corydon expires,
While brown Mingrelia, Musidorus fires ;
Chloe with golden tresses Colin binds,
But Daphnis yellow hair distasteful finds ;

Yet brown, or jetty-black enchant the most,
And, spite of yellow, the precedence boast ;
Many, grey eyes, beyond all others, like,
And brown, and black, can some resistless strike :
Variety of shapes the lovers please ;
Here the full grasp, there symmetry and ease ;
So many schisms Love's mighty altars know,
Which from the passions, or the fancy flow ;
Few sons of Venus orthodox are found ;
Such joys in infidelity abound.

Dispute likewise, the rougher beauties bear,
Which men in variegated portions share :
Ages and climes an alteration make,
The Moor for beauty blackest eyes will take ;
An arched nose with prominence blest,
Is by the ladies of the East caress'd :
The French love looks most ravishingly pale,
Where lilies triumph, and the roses fail.
The Spaniard glories in a browner hue
And thinks the colour to Apollo due :
His form is little, but his mind is great,
And spurns the confines of too partial fate ;
Ev'n where bright Phœbus rolls his golden car,
His beams too near, and Zephyrus too far,
The black inhabitants (with souls all storm,
Distorted features, and an hideous form)
Imagine British charms, unripened blow,
And think their own a captivating glow.
Whence these disputes in such an easy case,
Must be the business of the Muse to trace.

When first this universal frame was wrought,
And Chaos yielded to the Maker's thought.

Ere yet a change was made from golden times
To iron days, and adamantine crimes;
A beauteous arch heav'n's canopy display'd,
Where shining lamps æthereal light convey'd :
No noxious vapours from the ocean rose,
Nor baleful clouds a dark eclipse compose ;
The sun, refulgent, shot unclouded rays,
And silver Cynthia cast a paler blaze;
The plenteous (though uncultivated) earth
Bestow'd on fruits and flow'rs spontaneous birth ;
No pois'nous reptiles, no offensive smell
Was known on earth, or swelling waves, to dwell ;
A genius lovely bright, great Nature's soul,
Ran through the world, and beautify'd the whole :
Then, as the first and purest age began,
The fairest creature of the earth was Man.
A lovely form he wore, an upright mind
Neither to climate, nor to vice inclin'd :
The charms of empire and of wealth unknown,
He sought for happiness in love alone :
Virtue and beauty, then were near allied,
They knew no vice, their int'rest to divide :
Each virgin's eyes display'd a virtuous mind,
A spotless soul and spotless body join'd,
And in a lovely case the mental charms enshrin'd.

When Jove this work from great Olympus ey'd,
“ Let us complete the grand design,” he cried ;
“ Let all the glories of two worlds unite,
“ To form a matchless maid divinely bright.”
He spoke :—obedient to the Thund'rer's call,
The orbs of crystal into atoms fall,

To form the polish'd limbs with grace divine,
And through the structure with refulgence shine.
Phœbus, attentive to the lovely head,
Around her brows his glitt'ring sunbeams spread;
Aurora's blushes on her cheeks prevail,
And Cynthia kindly made her chaste and pale;
Venus her lips with shining coral dy'd,
And Cupid all remaining charms supplied.
The model made in ev'ry thing complete,
Jove gave æthereal, vivifying heat,
And rais'd to active life the wondrous frame,
Expressing all its beauty in its name;
Pandora call'd;—and, as the new-born maid
From earth arose, the godhead smil'd, and said:

“Go, most ador'd of all my offspring! Go!
“And with thy presence cheer the world below;
“Let happy mortals all thy charms behold,
“And view a beauty cast in heav'nly mould;
“Do thou and virtue both together shine,
“And, with united charms, the age refine;
“This box I give; but if true joy you'd know,
“Guard well the gift I cautiously bestow;
“Ten thousand plagues and poisons are within,
“Which will produce fraud, misery, and sin:
“Then keep it shut, or else you curse mankind,
“Yourself the first that will the ruin find.”

He said;—she flies, determin'd to obey,
And through æthereal regions wings her way;
Thence to the world below her passage steers,
And in full glory to mankind appears;
Great Epimetheus saw, with many more,
(And who could see such charms and not adore;)

The goddess plainly in her form is seen ;
Her glitt'ring dress, and soul-enchanting mien ;
The variegated beauties of her face,
Her curling locks that flow with pleasing grace,
Strike each beholder with unknown amaze,
And fix them in a lethargy of gaze.
While her bright eyes diffusive lustre crown'd,
And delegated charms to all around :
A strong reflection in each face appear'd,
As all who saw her in her beauty shar'd ;
Ev'n so Aurora first is seen to rise
And dart fresh glories from the eastern skies,
Smiles on the meadows and the pearly dew,
And brightens subjects for the rural muse.

Whilst Innocence among mankind remain'd,
And Nature's laws implicit were retain'd,
With mutual rapture, both the sexes strove
To gain the height of extacy in love ;
But when Simplicity to Vice gave way,
And Folly reign'd with arbitrary sway,
Pandora (though the daughter of a god)
Found pleasure in the lash of folly's rod.
Her female soul, inclin'd to disobey,
And straight to folly made mankind a prey.
The box she opens—noxious spirits rise,
And pestilential vapours stain the skies ;
Dull fogs the brightness of her eyes obscure,
Nor long the roses on her cheeks endure.
Hence, through the earth the spreading venom ran,
And seized on all the gen'rous pow'rs of man :
Bright Reason lost her first and purest fires,
And lawless passions reign'd, and wild desires :

Since when, true beauty is so hard to find,
The lovely body, or the lovely mind.
—May he who form'd us, suffer sin no more,
New day create, and Saturn's age restore !

Though through the world the fatal venom
rang'd

Its influence in different places chang'd :
The torrid zone, where Phœbus burns the plains,
And frigid, where continual winter reigns
Above the rest, the dire infection feel,
Which horrid forms, scarce humaniz'd, reveal.
Near the antarctic and the arctic poles
Distorted limbs enshrine their gloomy souls ;
And where the zodiac bears a sultry sway,
Through twelve bright signs where shoots the solar
ray,

Burn'd by the sun the swarthy Moor is seen
With swelling lips, flat nose, and hideous mien :
Yet near Arabia lies, a blissful seat,
As ancient bards and travellers relate ;
Where cold and heat their blended pow'rs unite
And form a clime for plenty and delight.
The whirling poles at equal distance lie,
And Libra mounts the summit of the sky,
Where Cynthia faint, or Sol more fiercely burns,
And cheer the world impartially by turns ;
Whence in full stores, the fertile region flows,
And ev'ry year a double harvest knows :
Here beauteous youths an healthy vig'rous race,
And blooming maids, the happy climate grace.
Sweet are their tempers, and their souls serene
As the bright suns, that gild the vernal scene.

Between the poles and torrid zone, is found
A beauteous isle with equal blessings crown'd,
The males are manly, and the females fair,
Nor can with these the neighb'ring states compare.
Beauties like these all other climes disdain,
The heat of Italy, and swarth of Spain.
Within this isle we find Elysian plains,
Here Venus smiles, and fruitful Ceres reigns ;
There proud Augusta rears her glitt'ring spires,
Whose golden summits shine with gleaming fires.
Thames' flowing arms, the lovely spot enfold,
Whose crystal waves enrich her meads of gold ;
And branching in a thousand liquid veins,
Diffuse wide plenty o'er the smiling plains.
Beauties, with rapture, fill each lover's arms,
And ev'ry nymph has all Pandora's charms :
A perfect stature, graceful to the eye,
That neither sinks too low, nor mounts too high,
Each forehead delicately strikes with awe ;
Each sparkling eye to ev'ry soul gives law.
Cherries upon the lips perfection gain,
And on the cheek the blushing roses reign :
The lily blossoms in the lovely skin,
Where the blue veins seem starting from within.
Who can describe the neck, and polish'd hair,
So sweetly smooth, and ravishingly fair ;
Or where the panting beauties of the breast
Rise to the touch, as suing to be press'd ;
With all those hidden charms conceal'd below,
Which custom hides, but passion fain would know ?
And as the fair each manly heart controuls,
The male has charms to melt all female souls ;

See on his face, how blooming vigour shines,
Sweetness with force, and strength with beauty joins :
Bright purple streams along his cheeks prevail,
Not stain'd with swarthy heat, nor sickly pale.
His graceful hair in twining tresses flows,
Each sprightly limb with native vigour glows.
Such manly beauties grace our happy isle,
Where kindly seasons wear a lasting smile ;
Where plac'd between the Bear and burning line,
The air's celestial, and the men divine.

Let those who would the art of love pursue
Apply to me, to gain the mystic clue :
Not ev'ry pair, who love the soft delights,
Are fit to grace the hymeneal rites ;
Let the deform'd and impotent refrain ;
Nor with rude hands the sacred altars stain :
When Nox and Phlegethon indulg'd their flame,
The Furies from their curs'd conjunction came ;
What indignation must beholders move,
To see a Cyclop awkwardly make love !
Does Proserpine look well in Pluto's arms ?
Or ugly Vulcan merit Venus' charms
Let the deform'd avoid the rites of love
And none but beauteous limbs the raptures prove .
For only those whom health and vigour bless
Are fit to love, and proper to caress ;
Far off the aged, and the weak remove,
Fit for the bed of sickness, not of love.
Let those who feel the gout's tormenting pain,
Or throes rheumatic, from the bliss abstain :
The valetudinarian, and the mad ;
The vapourish, and melancholy-sad ;

Or those whom tort'rous biles all hideous pai
And pangs venereal with contagion taint.

Through strange meanders flow the liquid seeds,
From which the race of human kind proceeds,
And if infection undulates the veins
The father's humours in the foetus reigns ;
Oft have I seen a weak distemper'd son
Suffer for crimes and follies not his own :
Let then, the well-match'd pair be fitly join'd ;
A healthful body, and a peaceful mind ;
No happy progeny shall crown the bed
Curs'd with decay, or with diseases spread :
With studious care, the harvest of mankind
Would yield a race more noble and refin'd ;
Man, when created, (sprung from heav'nly seed)
To bear his maker's image was decreed ;
To view the stars, celestial secrets know
And reign sole monarch of the world below.
Ye guardian pow'rs who rule the bed of joy !
Permit no ills that image to destroy :
And thou high heav'n ! whose mighty eye surveys
Our weakly frames and palpable decays ;
Again renew thy portrait in mankind,
Reform the body, and improve the mind !

Meanwhile, brisk lover ! to my strains give ear,
Grav'd on your tablets let my words appear :
Let age and constitution both agree,
Nor wed eighteen to furrow'd sixty-three,
From such unhallow'd rites great Hymen flies,
Extinct in smoke the bridal taper lies ;
Juno retires to give the Furies room,
Who cast around the bed a baleful gloom :

See fair Aurora from Tithonus rise,
Displeas'd her conscious blushes streak the skies.
She unenjoy'd remains, and drown'd in dew,
Does with the morn, her tears and grief renew ;
But Cybele, whom youthful Atys fires,
With prudence fond, pursues with chaste desires ;
Fearing her aged arms should chill his blood,
And stop the vigour of the genial flood.
The bed of age the sap of youth devours,
Dries up the seed, and chills the vital pow'rs ;
So the parch'd sand, on Lybia's sultry plain,
Sucks in dry cracks the gently-falling rain :
If sometimes chance bestows an ill-tim'd heir,
He lingers out a life of pain and care ;
Sickly and weak, curs'd in his parent's name,
His country's burthen, and his sex's shame.

Worse than the weak, the impotent, or old,
Is he, who courts that shining mischief, gold,
For love, the griping miser will detest,
Who thinks of money on a fair one's breast.

Curs'd be those parents, who to such would sue,
And beg the wretch their daughter will undo :
Who weds, perhaps, a sordid lump of clay,
Blasted with age, and impotent decay ;
Condemn'd to age, to sickness, and to pains,
Or to ill-nature, and eternal chains ;
She bans her parents, and too partial fate,
And gives her hand to one her heart must hate :
Where bliss unbounded, freely should appear,
We discontent, and sad complaining hear ;
Tir'd with embraces, with caresses cloy'd,
Never her soul, her body scarce enjoy'd,

She rises from the bed of sighs and groans,
Which Venus hates, and Hymen never owns.
Sometimes revenge and love, by turns, inspire,
And prompt an injur'd wife to loose desire ;
So very seldom nuptial bands can hold
The fair and hideous, or the young and old :
Then the town sparks assiduously repair
To give her extasies, and him—an heir :
In the child's look, or features, air and mien,
Plainly the curate or the captain's seen ;
The footman, or the gard'ner, here you view,
And clear distinction whence its birth it drew.
Hence springs the motly race, who quickly spend
Those sums, which from the mother's guilt descend.

These ills, which private families bewail,
Oft reach to kings, and at the throne prevail ;
From a distemper'd monarch's fruitless bed
The wanton queen hangs her dejected head
For vigour pants, ev'n in the midst of pow'r,
And wealth would sacrifice to one soft hour.

The aged dame to venerary inclin'd,
With a dry body and salacious mind,
Whose swimming eyes distil eternal brine,
Whose Indian teeth the burnish'd jet outshine ;
A thousand lovers court, to win her gold,
Whose youthful veins at sight of her grow cold,
And, from the twinkling of her lecherous eyes
Presage, whose fortune waits the golden prize :
Some cunning youth, more artful than the rest,
Finds a short passage to her aged breast ;
But, when posses'd of all, his passion flags,
And his discourse is bent on wanton hags,

With dotage, and with matrimony cloy'd,
 The dow'r too little—wife too much enjoy'd ;
 He gives himself the liberty to rove
 Through all the paths of habitable love,
 And grants to others, what she thinks her due,
 His wealth, his company, and raptures too ;
 Then jealousy and rage, her transports rouse,
 And she upbraids him with his slighted vows :
 To drink the fatal draught she turns her mind,
 A prey to grief and racking cares resign'd.
 Would great Religion leave to Nature's voice,
 To cull the pleasures, with unbounded choice :
 Then each, intuitive, by instinct led,
 No more would curse the sacred marriage-bed.
 But heav'n such lawless liberty denies,
 Ordaining sacred rites, and solemn ties.
 Happy the pair, who not by custom join'd,
 But noble instinct, marry in the mind :
 Who, truly one, divide in equal shares
 Their nightly pleasures, and their daily cares.

The raw, unripen'd girl, and beardless boy,
 Should, till maturity, refrain the joy ;
 This maxim is well known in Nature's plan,
 A child's unfit to propagate a man ;
 In such, the genial juice at random flows,
 And no constraint the flimsy current knows.

The virgin sooner that the boy may sport,
 And the fond, pleasing name of mother court :
 Observe the tokens of the gentle fire :
 When first the maiden glows with fierce desire,
 A florid crimson decorates her cheeks,
 And the soft wishes of the bosom speaks ;

Her panting breasts emit a thousand sighs,
And wanton ardour brightens in her eyes :
With fault'ring limbs, she meets the vig'rous boy,
Melts at his touch, and trembles to enjoy,
Sinks, with pleas'd transports in a lover's arms,
And, blushing, mourns her yet unrifled charms.

When, the ripe youth is conscious of delight,
(Pleas'd with involuntary acts each night)
The real joys of love, he then may taste,
Lest the pure stores of Nature run to waste.

If those who try an hymeneal cause,
Observe these rules, these statutes, and these laws ;
The Cytherean art would be refin'd,
To propagate a noble gen'rous mind.

Thus, while the extasies of love I sing
To you, great Sir, I strike the tuneful string :
Immortal Caius, by the fates design'd
To charm, and to improve all human kind ;
Each eye to please, and ev'ry heart engage,
And rise the hero of a happy age :
In thee a thousand manly beauties shine,
And speak thy soul approaching to divine ;
Fit for the skirmishes of war or love,
With sword to conquer, or with language move.
For thee a thousand lovely bosoms glow
On thee the brightest glances fondly flow ;
The lovely nymphs, that Severn's borders grace,
Or Thames' all charming, and immortal race,
Lavish on thee their wishes, hopes, and sighs,
And, for thy love, all other loves despise ;
Mourn, that against their sighs your heart you steel,
And all the frenzy of despair reveal.

But, when you make one happy by your voice,
Let prudent passion sanctify your choice :
Let your own eyes dwell on her lovely face,
Her smiles, her beauties, and her virtues trace.
While lofty princes other rules pursue,
Marry by proxy, and at distance woo ;
When envoys fetch from far a foreign queen,
Unknown her virtues, and her charms unseen ;
Court your fair spouse with ardour to your arms ;
For who, like you can judge, or conquer charms ?
Young let her be, and born of noble race,
Adorn'd with comeliness, replete with grace.
When youth and beauty in a palace shine
The people bow, and own the form divine :
A look from noble beauty is a law,
And strikes the vulgar with uncommon awe ;
But should some female with unlovely face,
Boasting high birth, but void of winning grace,
Court thee, lascivious, to her longing arms,
And think her pedigree sufficient charms ;
Shun the false bait, and the detested bed,
And think not genealogies to wed.
See mighty Jove, when wedded Juno cloyed,
In others arms pursue more sprightly joys ;
From ills like these my friend, by times retire,
Nor seek to wed without a mutual fire ;
Let no ignoble ends thy purpose move
To buy ambition at the price of love.
Beauty describ'd and means to know it shown,
I now shall mount the hymeneal throne,
By certain rules direct the wedded pair,
To gain with extasy a lovely heir ;

Ev'n to the marriage-bed pursue the song,
And bring each love and ev'ry grace along.

Hence ye profane ! nor dare approach the rites
To which the god of soft desires invites :
But welcome you ! thrice welcome to the scene,
Ye favoured votaries of the blissful queen,
Celestial Venus ! come, and see the joys
Prepar'd for melting maids and gen'rous boys ;
Such joys as far exceed the joys of wine
Exalt the sentiments, the taste refine,
And surely lift your mortal to divine !

Whilst these I sing, a blameless task I own,
Of censure fearless, as to crime unknown :
Nor you, ye grave, despise the poet's lay,
Who follows but where Nature leads the way ;
No vile, unmanly strains his song deface,
Which artless flows, and shines with simple
grace :

Nor burns his muse with lewd unhallow'd fires,
Nor sings preposterous loves, nor wild desires ;
Though these the Roman bard long since essay'd,
The theme of wonder to the blushing maid,
Whose soul, perhaps, confess'd a purer flame,
Free as her heart, and spotless as her fame.

Ye tender virgins, when my strains ye read,
With laurels crown your poet for his meed ;
Those laurels I to Phœbus shall consign,
His be the offering, as the glory mine ;
From him alone, the happy thought could rise,
Of lifting love and beauty to the skies,
Of teaching how, with sweet and winning grace
To deck our present, and our future race ;

The votive gift shall bribe the pow'r of days.
To join his influence with the rules I raise :
His plastic energy shall form with care
The rising offspring, vig'rous all, and fair,
Shall give the beateous mind, gay shape, and
lovely air.

THE CONJUGAL DIRECTORY.

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE Nuptial Night. Precepts to Lovers. Story of Vulcan. Morning the best time for the feats of Hymen. The Counsel of Phœbus in the Synod of the gods. Astrological Scheme. The Twelve Signs of the Zodiac described; their influence over the Human Frame. Description of the shrine of Cytheræa. Instructions for such as would wish for male children. Apology of the Muse, and her transition to another subject.

THE festal train are met; the shades of night,
To sweetest mirth and Bacchus gifts invite;
With purest juice the flowing bowls are crown'd,
The valted roofs with tuneful strains resound:
To frolic joys, the youths and maids advance,
Join in the sports, or mingle in the dance.
Lo! flame-rob'd Hymen leads the train along,
Exalts their joys and elevates their song!
The conscious muse, a welcome bidden guest,
Close by his side, attends the genial feast,
Close by his side, she joins the tuneful choir,
And swells the sounding strain, and strikes the living
lyre.

Of love, she sings, the melting joys that wait
On am'rous blessings and the nuptial state ;
A song of joys, awak'd by Nature's pow'r,
A song of bliss that crowns the genial hour,
A song of loves, and Venus' sacred rites,
A song of kisses, and of dear delights ;
Of bridal pledges, dear to those who wed,
The valu'd blessings of the marriage bed.

Thee, Venus, first, she sings in *Ida's* grove,
Bless'd with the prize of beauty and of love :
(By *Paris* giv'n ; the youth, whose honour'd name,
Stands first with lovers in the lists of Fame,)
Friend to mankind, who prompt'st to am'rous deeds,
And fill'st with genial warmth the swelling seeds !
But not at cold *Diana's* virgin shrine,
She bows, nor calls on *Pallas'* aid divine ;
Relentless maids, who still delight to wield
The huntress' jav'lin, or *Gorgonian* shield !
Far be your rules austere ! Nor without blame
Sings she of mighty *Jove's* unhallow'd flame
For *Phrygian* *Ganymede*, belov'd in vain ;
Or *Pæan's* shame, the boy untimely slain ;
Best veil'd in darkness. Other themes the muse,
More grateful to the am'rous ear, will chuse ;
Such as experienced dames, who oft have tried
The sports of love, may teach the list'ning bride.
By these push'd on, she fearless takes the field,
Where blushing beauty conquers but to yield.

The guests retir'd, the youth with eager haste
Seeks his bright spouse, who sighs to be embrac'd ;
With ardent looks beholds her swimming eyes,
And glowing cheeks, where purple charms arise ;

Her heaving breasts, of purest snowy hue,
 Exactly round, and tempting to the view :
 Her ev'ry charm his lovesick heart inspires,
 And fills with love, and eager, fond desires.
 While yet he hangs upon the melting kiss,
 And sighing, panting, burns for higher bliss ;
 " Haste, haste, (he cries) unloose the virgin zone,
 " And let my charming bride be all my own."

—Rash youth desist!—Thy joys a while forbear,
 And think thy future offspring claims thy care ;
 Sooth thy fair spouse ! With gentle kisses warm,
 While glowing blushes heighten every charm ;
 Let each delight thy raptur'd bosom prove ;
 But yet delay the last dear task of love :
 Fresh from the festal board, if thus you meet,
 Not long the transport, nor the bliss complete,
 While Love's warm balm in vain you seek to pour,
 An unconcocted, tepid, drizzling show'r :
 For hence no males replete with gen'rous fire
 Shall spring ; no beauteous damsels call you sire.
 Weak, foul, mis-shap'd, soon verging tow'rd's an end,
 Are the sad offspring which such rites attend ;
 For sages say, the warm and active juice,
 Which purple wines and Ceres' gifts produce ;
 The kindly strength which feeds the genial flame
 Of love, or nourishes the vital frame :
 All these (a rude and indigested heap)
 Digestive pow'rs will ripen while you sleep ;
 Strain through unnumber'd tubes the flowing tide,
 And blood from chyle, and sperm from blood divide.
 Soft perspiration through the pores distills
 Superfluous moisture ; livelier vigour fills

The turgid vein ; till fresh from downy rest,
Calm peace and health reign equal in your breast,
Then urge your suit, around the fair entwine :
In am'rous folds, and close embraces join :
Joyful complete what ardent you began,
And stamp an image worthy of a man.

Who has not heard how once Olympian Jove
Rush'd hot and eager to the feats of love :
Warm from the nectar bowl, and with rude haste
The beauteous consort of his reign embrac'd.
Around the God no breathing odours spread,
But storms and light'ning play'd about the bed ;
The little loves withdrew ; but lust remain'd,
The rites polluted, and the union stain'd :
From thence arose a foul and hateful form,
Foul as the lightning, rugged as the storm :
Him his great father from Olympus hurl'd
To forge his thunders in the nether world :
Ev'n homely Pallas scorn'd his proffer'd vows,
Yet Venus (rover !) deign'd to be his spouse ;
Not that she joy'd in such a rough embrace,
But sought an husband, patient of disgrace,
While gods and men promiscuous fill his place :
For not in heav'n alone, her pleasures dwell,
Her scapes the nymphs, and am'rous sylvans tell.
Who has not heard of soft Adonis' love,
And the stol'n pleasures of sweet Ida's grove,
(Anchises' boast) from whence Æneas rose,
His country's hope, the dread of Grecian foes,
Whose arms Achaia through her cities mourn'd,
Long after Priam's fall, and Ilion's tow'rs o'erturn'd.

When first we look upon the ambient sky,
And, sick of day, send forth a feeble cry,
On the blue arch astrologers will gaze,
And form predictions from the mingled rays ;
But you, more wise, ye sires, attend with care,
What planet rules, when you embrace the fair ;
For then the mass, each soft impression takes,
Which earth, or air, or heav'nly influence makes ;
The threads of life unspun, their form receive
From various accidents, whose pow'r can give
Unnumber'd diff'rent shapes to the soft mould,
As artists frame with heat the ductile gold.
The womb receives it then, and clos'd around,
Keeps its sweet charge in tender membranes bound,
Till nine revolving months their course have run,
Then shews the sacred treasure to the sun,
Whose sex, complexion, shape and air declare
The pow'rful influence of the ruling star.

But oh ! what mortal science can unfold,
The fatal mysteries above enroll'd ?
Thou goddess thou ! of high celestial birth,
Scornful of lower air, and sordid earth,
To whom, the willing gates of heav'n disclose
Each starry orb, that in her bosom glows :
Do thou, Urania, aid me, and inspire,
Thy heav'nly poet with an heav'nly fire !
Hard is the task the beauteous theme to raise,
But well sung beauty will reward with praise.
If thou thy influence shed, and guide my tongue,
Sweet shall the tuneful numbers flow along,
And own thee patroness of my harmonious song.

Think not, oh! man those countless orbs that roll
On yon high arch, and deck the whirling pole,
Think not those radiant stars, which nightly shine
From highest heav'n (the work of pow'r divine)
Were but to raise thy admiration wrought,
Or vainly from the womb of Night were brought,
(Primeval Night! which heard the Maker's call,
And at his fiat form'd this beauteous all,
Feeming with heaven and earth, an offspring fair,
Deck'd with yon ball of fire, and ev'ry glittering star)
No!—Ev'ry rolling sphere, which wheels on high,
Tells as it were, the secrets of the sky;
Some rains presage, and storms, and tempests dire,
And earthquakes some, and some devouring fire;
Some tell of slaughter'd troops, and realms o'erturn'd,
Of heroes bleeding and of cities burn'd;
Whilst others speak of Peace with Plenty crown'd,
And solemn leagues, with mutual profit bound
Of mirth and joy, and love, a smiling train,
With all the blessings of old Saturn's reign:
Orion's sword, the wat'ry Hyades,
And the hot parching of the summer days,
When Sirius reigns: who knows not these and more
Who would not tremble at the lion's roar;
When Jove and Mars their evil influence join,
In sad conjunction with the raging sign?
Such planets Discord loves, relentless pow'r!
Who threats perpetual in their baneful hour,
Unreins the steeds of war, gives Ruin birth,
And strews with slaughter'd chiefs the groaning earth,
She civil rage foment, dissolves the band
Of love and friendship in our native land:

Ev'n now she waves her torch ! sweet peace ! descend
Avert the omen, and our race defend ;
She (while each envious star shot baleful fires,
O'er lofty Rome) possess'd with vain desires
Julius, the first of men : lo ! swell'd with pride,
His gods, his friends, his country he defied,
Bore war's alarms ev'n to his native shore,
And stain'd th' Ausonian plains with Roman gore,
Him Pompey yet withstood, and eager ran,
With gods averse, to meet the mighty man :
Pharsalia blush'd with blood : what need I tell,
The Rebel's triumph, while the Roman fell ?
Such sad effects the stars malignant bring
Such dreadful evils from their influence spring.

And when that pest which raging in the reins,
Diffuses pain and venom through the veins,
First spread o'er human kind its hated sway,
Then Mars and Saturn (ancient stories say)
In Cancer met ; a dismal congress held,
At which, the fair Hygeia was expell'd :
To earth the dread contagion they convey'd
Whose dire effects through all our regions spread ;
Destructive of the genial vigour, ran,
Through all our youths, and damp'd the pow'rs of
man.

But these are secrets which are veil'd on high,
In the bright regions of the azure sky,
Known yet to few ; whom Phœbus deigns inspire
With sacred lore, and warm with heav'nly fire.
Proceed my muse, the secret to unfold,
How ruin'd beauty was retriev'd of old ;

What time the gods their counsel deign'd bestow,
To heal the cares of mortal man below.

In early years, when first the iron age
Open'd its scenes of lust and lawless rage,
Mankind a monst'rous progeny brought forth;
Giants and savage forms possess'd the earth:
The stars withdrew their smiles, and ev'ry grace
Fled from the frightful and uncomely race;
The nuptial pow'rs their wonted aid denied,
Fled the sad bridegroom, and the mourning bride:
This Jove beheld, and weighing in his mind
The cries and sad complainings of mankind.
He summons to the throne, with awful voice,
The pow'rs presiding over nuptial joys.
The Sister and the Wife of Jove were there,
Sweeping with peacock's tails the balmy air:
Venus, far distant from the Cyprian grove,
Attends the cause of Beauty and of Love:
There did the planter of the vine appear,
And Ceres, goddess of the fruitful year.
The council sat; Almighty Jove began,
And told the sad, distressful state of man,
His supplications to high heav'n for grace,
And woes eterniz'd in a sightless race.

Thus he :—Then Phœbus from amidst the gods
Arose; and as th' assenting thund'rer nods,
Bespoke the synod thus. “Celestial thrones,
Whose ears mankind have fill'd with ceaseless groans;
Permit me, who the world's wide bounds survey,
And measure out my travels with the day;
To tell of wand'ring stars and orders bright,
Who feed their lamps and fill their urns with light

And the great zone, which girds the world around
With twelve bright signs in glitt'ring order crown'd :
From these deformity or beauty rise,
By laws eternal, written in the skies.

“ When Aries rules before his fleecy fires
Each gentle love and winning grace retires ;
The boy conceiv'd beneath his hated reign,
No manly beauty ever shall attain.
Limbs ill-proportioned ; stupid, downcast eyes,
An ill-form'd head beyond the common size ;
White flaxen locks, that monstrous head to deck,
Flow o'er his ears and wanton in his neck ;
Whose swarthy skin, like harden'd scales is seen,
With frequent warts, and bristly hairs between.
Saturn completes the mass and forms the mind
More hateful than the body was design'd,
The male of vigour and of love disarms,
And spoils the female of her hidden charms.

“ Nor less fierce Taurus threats, a hated sign,
And mars the beauties of the promis'd line ;
The Pleiades, themselves a lovely race,
Deny their charms to ev'ry other face ;
Unless kind Cynthia interpose her pow'r,
And shine propitious on the natal hour.

“ Not so bright Gemini : the brother fires,
Instil soft love and teem with gay desires ;
Themselves all harmony, a friendly pair,
As Helen gentle, and as Læda fair ;
All lovely charms with vigour they supply
The smile that sparkles in the am'rous eye ;
The glossy white, that o'er the skin displays
A snowy lustre ; and the tints that raise

Warm blushes on the cheek ; all these belong
To the Twin Stars that grace my tuneful song.

“ How far unlike distorted Cancer draws
His backward limbs, and drags his clenching claws,
Author of monstrous shapes ! uneven set,
Of tumours, wens, and members incomplete !
Hence apish forms, and ugly births began,
And gibbous dwarfs, beneath the strain of man.

“ See next the great Alcides’ trophy rise,
The blazing Leo, raging in the skies !
His pow’r in yellow locks is seen exprest,
In flashing eyes, and ample width of chest,
In large and brawny limbs, in feature bold,
And stature of a tall, gigantic mould ;
Such forms are ever by this sign express’d ;
What less can be expected from the beast,
That once laid waste fair Argo’s fertile land,
And merited to fall by great Alcides’ hand.
Tyrants and savage tempers he inspires
With tenfold heat, and fills with madd’ning fires,
Unless some gentler planet can assuage
The angry sign, and curb his boist’rous rage.

“ But Virgo, fairest, loveliest light, that shines
Propitious, bright Astrea that refines
The age with justice, situate on high,
Dispensing milder radiance from the sky ;
Near where the well-known Spike sublime aspires,
And brandish’d torch devours æthereal fires,
Still on the world the happiest gifts bestow ;
Unnumber’d blessings from such influence flow,
Whose kindly pow’r shall bless the wedded pair,
Give beauties to the good, and virtues to the fair.

“ When smiling *Libra* sheds her genial rays,
A thousand beauties in each scale she weighs,
And favours all beneath with fair increase :
Venus with her a frequent guest resides,
And each by turns o’er *Love* and *Mirth* presides.
But *Saturn* often, with a spiteful gleam,
Rebates the brightness of her purer beam,
As oft’ the sullen god’s endeavour fails ;
Still *Venus* reigns, and *Beauty* still prevails.

“ We next proceed in *Scorpio*’s train to view
The sordid features and the sickly hue ;
Dreadful, unfurling his envenom’d folds,
Half the bright track of heav’n the monster holds :
His form to every *Love* and *Grace* unknown,
Makes every shape as wretched as his own.
His nauseous products through the world are seen ;
Long legs, large feet, red hair, and hideous mien.
Such squalid forms, his hated pow’r betray,
Sprung from rude principles of slimy clay.

“ In *Sagittarius*’ double form we trace,
A dubious birth, and an uncertain grace.
Chiron the wife, who great *Achilles* sway’d,
And sage instruction to his mind convey’d.
Expiring, grac’d that heav’n, which he before
Had taught unknowing mortals to adore :
There he remains (according to the plan)
His human part propitious still to man ;
For if above the parting waves he show
His head and shoulders, o’er his *Cretan* bow.
The happy sign agreeing traces leaves,
And blesses every womb which then conceives ;

But if he drags the horse's tail behind,
The brutal part prevails, and curses all the kind.

“But Capricorn, to Saturn near allied,
Curs'd by the vig'rous sire and teeming bride,
Deforms the face, and blisters all the skin,
And fills the mind deprav'd with lechery and sin.

“The bright Aquarius, fruitful, still, and mild,
Stamps a sweet image on the lovely child ;
The smiling boy in his effects is shown,
Blooming in charms and beauties like his own.

“The wat'ry Pisces, impotent and weak,
The temper of the offspring still will speak ;
Aukward in shape and mien, deform'd of face,
Nor hairs the head, nor strength the body grace :
With thinnest humours fill'd, and void of fire ;
No vig'rous heat the trembling nerves inspire :
The cold, dull heart no tender passion knows,
The bosom with no gen'rous ardour glows ;
But love and courage both extinguish'd lie,
When Pisces holds the summit of the sky.

“What need I more?—'Twere endless to declare
The hidden pow'rs of each revolving star.
When they contend and jar, when meet and join,
Of Quadrate Sextile, opposite and Trine.
The queen of beauty, and thou, mighty Jove,
Are the two only constant pow'rs above,
Still kind to mortals, still indulging love.

“All tongues to bless the welcome May conspire,
That prompts to joy, and stirs the am'rous fire ;
Then sprightly spirits through the air diffuse ;
The teeming earth a thousand forms renews ;

But when the sultry summer burns the plains,
The blood dries up within the boiling veins;
The vigour wastes; the vitals chafe and sweat,
And all the genial force dissolves with heat
In gen'rous males; yet oft' the women find
This season to their am'rous wishes kind;
By nature cold they joy in warmer days,
And own the influence of my sov'reign rays,
Which pierce earth's inmost womb; the yielding fair
Oft at this time rewards her lover's care,
Receives the youth to her high panting breast,
Clasp'd in his arms, and sighs to be caress'd;
Resigns her beauties, melts in am'rous fires,
And sinks o'erpow'r'd with love and soft desires.
When milder Autumn Phœbus' rays dispels,
The spirits flag and sink within their cells;
But when the Winter reigns, all cold and chill,
The fire goes out, the genial stream stands still.
Yet man! vain man! pursues his eager joys,
Nor on the proper times his thoughts employs;
But in ill-chosen nights and luckless days,
Goes on to propagate a homely race."
Thus mighty Phœbus spoke;—the list'ning train
Of gods, with Jove, assent and praise the stain;
The Sister Muses catch each sacred word,
And ev'ry rule in golden words record;
The fairest of the nine that drink the spring,
Who aids my verse, and loves the art I sing.
To me, her voted bard, in secret taught,
These oracles from hallow'd Pindus brought.
Nor is it hard to learn this useful art,
Since the skill'd sages ev'ry year impart

The annals of the heav'ns, whose rules explain
The stars, their motions ; when they rise and reign ;
This gen'ral rule apply to ev'ry case,
In twice twelve hours the whole etherial space,
Turns round from east to west, and finishes the race.

Nor is it only proper to impart
How much the heav'nly system suits our art,
And how the nicest time for joy to chuse ;
Still hear, ye husbands ! my instructive muse.
Press not your joys, when taught by nature's laws,
Monthly from Hymen's rites the fair withdraws ;
Howe'er her breast may heave with soft desire,
Yet rushing torrents quench the am'rous fire :
Seek not love's altar then ; in time be wise,
Nor offer unaccepted sacrifice :

Avoid polluted loves ; the scatter'd seed
Shall mock your hopes, and well avenge the deed :
Or if an offspring rise, the infant's veins
Shall prove the poison which that stream contains ;
A poison so severe, the tender vine
Dies at its touch, and flow'rs their heads recline ;
On corn, or blooming buds, the venom cast,
They fade, as at the lightning's fatal blast ;
Lick'd by the dog, it proves his certain bane,
And heats to giddy whirls his madd'ning brain.
Ye husbands, then, such foul embraces fly,
And, though provok'd, the nauseous bliss deny ;
Be patient ;—for a happier union stay,
The fruit will well reward your wise delay.

Ye too, fond wives, who, in excess of joy,
Snatch at the sweets, and too much heat employ ;

Invent not various ways to taste the bliss,
But soft and gentle take the melting kiss.
Be modest; nor to shew the woman's force,
Disgrace the sex, and spoil the genial course :
Obey great Nature, all her laws revere,
And she shall make your ev'ry joy sincere.
Forgive me, nymphs, if by my subject led,
I follow nature to her fountain-head :
As I describe, let the pursuing eye,
The form and fashion of each part descry.

In close recesses, hid from curious eyes,
Beneath a shade the blissful region lies ;
A rising eminence the vale surrounds,
And justly marks the limitary bounds
On ev'ry side :—beneath cool fountains flow,
Which water all the fertile fields below :
A thwarting line divides the middle space :
Here sport the boys, and *there* the virgin plays.
A shady walk, adjoining to the grove,
Leads thence to the delightful bow'rs of love.
The various mazes you with pleasure trace,
While lovely streams irriguate all the place,
Here Venus sports upon the smiling plain ;
Here nature first beings her active reign.
As when the rustic thirsts to cheer his soul,
With large potations from the flowing bowl,
So gapes the field, to catch the balmy dews,
Which genial nature's kindly pow'rs infuse :
The welcome moisture fills each swelling seed,
Blossoms and buds, and richest crops succeed.
The mould refresh'd, first closing to conceal
The latent store which after-times reveal :

Pleasing to sense, and grateful to the eye,
The birth mature springs upward to the sky :
But if rude floods descend, or tempests blow,
In mud and slime lie all the plains below ;
Then shall no swain the teeming furrows boast,
But find his wishes and his labours lost.

Most parents' pray'rs, could they with heav'n
prevail,

Would seek, to crown their joys, a sprightly male
Nor deem the Muse too partial if she lend
Her aid to these, and their desires attend.
Not that she thinks with such as, erring wide,
Give all their succour to the stronger side,
And say that Nature from her purpose stray'd,
And puny girls by accident were made ;
As if she blindly huddled up the frame,
And thence the lovely monstrous creature came :
Wildly they rave, ill-taught in reason's school,
Forgetting, that the goddess acts by rule.
As many males, as fill the teeming earth,
So many females too would grace the birth ;
Save that the woes and accidents of life,
From foreign dangers, or from civil strife,
Demand a greater increase of the male,
Lest that the noble, gen'rous stock should fail ;
Far be it from the poet, in his song,
To do the fairest of Heav'n's creatures wrong :
Hail gentle soothers of our racking cares !
The muse your beauty and your worth declares,
And shall declare, while spring renews the grove,
Or melting music charms the ear of love.

But, to be just, and to support the line ;
To the male offspring still we must incline,
Still favour those who greatly wish to claim
A race of heroes, emulous of fame,
Or calculated to support the race
Of kings and princes with becoming grace.
That still those honours which the line attend,
May to their heirs successively descend.

From searching Nature and her works, 'tis found
That heat and vigour in the male abound :
This truth by plain experiment is seen,
In man's excelling strength and portly mien,
In well-knit limbs, and closer parts confest,
And urgent spirits heaving in the breast ;
This, too, in his superior soul is prov'd,
Unshock'd by danger, and by fear unmov'd ;
His industry, his wisdom, wit, and parts,
Equipp'd for hardy arms or peaceful arts.
He that with hopes of such a race is fir'd,
Must, by the same prolific warmth inspir'd,
Begin the work ; the noblest dainties chuse,
And fill the swelling veins with gen'rous juice ;
For all must own, the generative flood
Is form'd and temper'd from the mass of blood.
These parts anew the floating spirits range,
And to a frothy white their substance change :
This may direct thee in the choice of meat,
To such as most partakes of juice and heat :
Thus as the springs the lower vessels drain,
The working seed may to a male attain.
What foods more aptly to the work belong,
Might haply prove the subject of my song ;

But Nature, in her course profusely kind,
Courts ev'ry taste, and leaves lame art behind;
With open hand her various blessings sows,
And, unrepenting, all her good bestows.
Suffice it only, in a grateful verse,
The joyous gifts of Bacchus to rehearse.
The vine, affording gen'rous sparkling juice,
Will, to the wish'd production most conduce :
That chief which reddens on Burgundia's plains,
Where scarce the skin the swelling flood contains,
And fam'd Campania's juice :—yet shun excess,
Or hope not Hymen shall thy labours bless.
The gracious pow'r that moulded woman's frame,
Gave moisture to her womb, but to her temper flame;
And these exalted by the vinous heat,
A proper mixture for the male complete ;
But us'd too frequently, the purple streams
Shall damp the native heat with sickly steams,
Nature oppress'd, in her foundation sails,
Too weak from thence, to form the vig'rous males.
These truths once father Bacchus learn'd to prove,
When, full of wine, he press'd the Queen of Love ;
Folding the goddess in his drunken arms,
Glowing he kiss'd, and rifled all her charms :
Crude was th' embrace ;—from that false rapture came
A sickly girl, deform'd, the am'rous parent's shame.
Let prudence then thy temp'rate joys controul,
Those of the bridal bed and flowing bowl ;
For too much wine the brain and sense will cloy,
And strength decays with oft'-repeated joy :
The sickly humours damp the genial seed,
Allay its heat, and spoil the manly breed.

Let then our former precepts be obey'd :
Prefer the morn to night's unwholesome shade ;
For morning ever for the male is best,
The seed maturing in the time of rest.
Mark well the skies what star propitious shines,
And chuse the best of the celestial signs.
While Læda's twins, Aquarius, or the Scales,
Or dubious Chiron's better half prevails ;
If join'd with Saturn, Mars, or warmer Jove,
Or Phœbus, grateful to the feats of love ;
'Then urge thy suit, thy choicest strength employ,
Secure to propagate a lovely boy.

Next, when the seeds of either sex are mix'd,
And the warm balsam in the womb is fix'd ;
Then warn the bride to aid the kind design,
Gently to turn, and on the *right* recline :
'Tis said (howe'er the notion took its rise)
That on this side the manly offspring lies :
Nay, some, still copying from the rustic band,
A stranger way to procreate males have plan'd,
And taught the men their weaker parts to bind,
And use but half the vigour of their kind ;
For thus, they say, the wise and artful swain,
Does from his herds a race of males obtain ;
But, others tell, beyond the burning zone,
A swarthy race of savage men are known,
Who spoil themselves in youth of half their pow'r,
And wait (half-eunuchs) for the genial hour ;
Yet males and females spring from their embrace,
And nature crowns them with a num'rous race :
—But whether rules like those the bride delight,
For males are got by turning to the *right* ;

Howe'er that be, the calmest state is best,
And the pleas'd fair must lie a while at rest,
Lest rude commotion should the fruit destroy
Of the wild transport and tumultuous joy.

What need I more ; or why offend the sight
With nauseous images of foul delight?
Why paint inverted acts of lustful strife,
The passive husband and the active wife?
How monsters and hermaphrodites are bred,
And shapes deform'd, that stain the marriage-bed.
The Muse forbids, and warns me to retire,
From scenes like these that fan unhallow'd fire :
A better theme, a nobler song I chuse
For the unmarried bard and virgin muse.
I sing the plastic energy and pow'r,
That sheds rich comfort on the genial hour,
That still renews the world which seemly grace,
And multiplies our blessings in our race ;
While fleeting time completes th' indulgent plan,
And the wish'd offspring ripens into Man.

THE CONJUGAL DIRECTORY.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Signs of Conception. Love then not to be repeated. The Tale of Saturn and Phyllira. Effects of Imagination. Epicurean System. Danger of Riding, and too violent Exercise to Pregnant Women. Ill Effects of the Small-Pox. Conclusion.

WHEN first the Bride conceives, the wonted course
Of Nature stops, and owns the genial force,
Which the warm tide of ebbing blood restrains,
While pleasing horrors trickle through the veins:
The heaving breasts are fill'd with milky juice,
Which vessels, form'd for that wise end, produce:
Then let the pregnant fair, in Nature skill'd,
Aid the new birth, and form a handsome child.

Ye teeming matrons, listen to my strains,
Assur'd th' effect shall recompense your pains.
Follow where Hymen graciously invites,
And Juno, goddess of the nuptial rites:
Make me your pilot, if you ask a race
With a hale body, and a beauteous face,
Belov'd by ev'ry pow'r, and deck'd with ev'ry grace!

Now let the breeding spouse betimes retreat
From feats of love, and check her forward mate.
When liquids upon liquids mingling pour,
They damp the genial heat, its strength devour,
With frequent shocks disperse the gath'ring seeds,
While fruitless and abortive pain succeeds :
So fall the blossoms from the trees, expos'd
To warring winds, in gardens ill-inclos'd ;
And waste the promis'd fruit, whose product lost,
The master's hopes of summer all are cross'd.
Nor think it hard, ye fair-ones to refrain ;
Since wolves and goats, the rovers of the plain,
When they perceive the teeming seeds prevail,
Refuse the leap and shun the vig'rous male.

When the warm fœtus feels the genial heat,
And the first pulse of life begins to beat ;
When the soft limbs, with nerves and sinews bound,
Inclose the active soul, and clap it round,
Then let the mother heed what I advise ;
To turn from all uncomely sights her eyes ;
Nor let her fancy rove o'er dismal caves,
Through gloomy paths, beset with dreary graves ;
But ev'ry joyful scene explore with care,
And dwell on soft ideas bright and fair ;
For while the curious work unfinish'd lies,
The brain, to whose close cells each object flies,
Conveys, by subtile atoms, to the womb
All images which from the senses come.
The passive fœtus no resistance makes,
But ev'ry form and light impression takes :

Easy as when th' experienc'd matron stands,
To mould the yielding paste with skilful hands,
This way and that it bends with gentle play,
Till heat has drank its moisture all away :
Then rise th' imagin'd tow'rs and brittle walls
Till all the pageant at the banquet falls.
So soft the form, it asks your utmost care
To rear an offspring delicate and fair :
Be cheerful then, and all your thoughts employ
On grateful scenes of love, and mirth, and joy.

From the cold ocean sprung, with warm desire
Young Phyllira did Saturn once inspire :
Whilst on her native shores, the blooming maid
Amongst her sister sea-nymphs heedless play'd,
The God descending from the realms above,
Seiz'd her by force, and bore her to the grove,
Vain were her shrieks, while compass'd in his arms,
With matchless strength he rifled all her charms.
Beneath the shadow of a gloomy bow'r
Did the old god the weeping nymph deflow'r :
But, yet, great Cybele, who heard her cries,
Too late to aid her, left the azure skies,
And threat'ning vengeance for her injur'd bed,
Pursu'd the ravisher, who quickly fled.
He rang'd the woods, chang'd to a horse's shape,
And left his new-made love to mourn the luckless
rape.

Spoil'd of her virgin charms the mourning maid
Seeks refuge in each solitary shade.
Nine moons she wander'd till the pond'rous load,
That fill'd the womb, the offspring of a god,

Strange to relate! appear'd of double kind,
A man before, a hairy horse behind.
Trembling and pale she hung her drooping head,
And, weeping, from her hated offspring fled.
“Is this,” she cried, “the heir of our pure line,
And such the hideous fruit of love divine?
For sure a god compress'd me in his arms,
And robb'd me, helpless, of my virgin charms.
Oh! had that god his wretched love but slain!
And that way eas'd me of a mother's pain!”

Fainting she spoke:—her sister nymphs attend,
And gentle words with kind assistance blend.
Soon as her soul, and wasted strength, returns,
Again she weeps, again incessant mourns;
Whole days and nights bewails her wretched state,
And begs from pitying heav'n a speedy fate:
Weary'd at length, kind Somnus gently stole
To her soft eyes and lull'd her troubl'd soul,
And while she, lock'd in gentle slumbers, lay,
The goddess Phantasy, divinely gay,
Chose from ten thousand forms of thinnest air,
The brightest shape and thus address'd the fair:
“Cease lovely nymph, nor grieve so much in vain,
The error of thy own delusive brain:
Oft has it figur'd Saturn to thy sight,
With hideous neighings, and produc'd the fright;
And oft have I (who all complexions shew,
And paint all species to th' internal view)
His hairy limbs thee meditating seen,
And dwelling on his form with pensive mien.

When rustling through the wood, with winged hoof,
He flew amain, to shun his injur'd wife's reproof.
And thee, deflow'r'd to all thy woes resign'd,
Revolving his foul image in thy mind ;
Whence to a human head, a horse's back was join'd.
But if, when pregnant, thou hast thought aright,
Nor forc'd me to depaint this odious sight :
A pure, unblended offspring had been thine,
With heav'nly beauty grac'd, and shape divine.
Yet, hapless nymph, to mitigate thy smart,
And ease with comfort thy afflicted heart ;
Not wholly lost to hope, enjoy thy woe :
Oft from black clouds the beams of Phœbus flow,
And oft reviving joys from past misfortunes grow.
Hear then, what I, precious of coming fate,
(Not always feigning idle dreams) relate.
Thy present sorrows, this prodigious boy
Shall largely recompense with future joy.
When, in the full maturity of age,
His prudent hand shall write life's manly page ;
Then shall his vast, surprising genius shine,
All eyes amazing, as his birth does thine.
He shall the level of mankind disdain,
And speak and think above a human strain.
His searching mind shall nature's wealth explore
Her inmost rooms, and undiscover'd store.
Of earth and ocean shall the secrets know,
Of plants and herbs, and for what use they grow,
Of metals, gems, and all the living world below.
Nor thus contented with a narrow flight,

From the scorn'd globe shall soar, and lessening to
the sight,

Shall heav'ns bright volumes read, and scan each
starry night.

Nor shall his hairy hide, and shape so foul,
Disgrace his lofty and sagacious soul.

Thetis, the seed of Nereus, shall prepare
Her own Achilles for thy offspring's care.

His skill the youthful hero shall inspire
To rule the fiery steed, and touch the tuneful lyre.

His martial pupil shall his youth employ
In arms, and, when betray'd to war, destroy
Dardanian tow'rs, and Priam's lofty Troy.

Then, when thy Chiron's mortal half shall die,
His soul shall mount aloft, and sparkle in the sky."'
She said, and straight dissolv'd to empty air,
Her phantoms with her fled, and left the waking fair.
She now reliev'd, from her tormenting pains,
Feels a new life rekindle in her veins.

Her lazy blood flows with a brisker stream,
Her strength recover'd by the pleasing dream,
Whose healthy joys her better mind restore,
Her heart, which ruffling storms had vex'd before,
Is all a gentle calm, tumultuous now no more.

Wak'd from deep thinking, she begins to find
Light to her eyes, and comfort to her mind.
But since an object, which disturb'd her sight,
Produc'd this length of woes, and sad affright :
Her eyes no more survey the monstrous whale,
With spouting jaws, and huge extended tail.
The slimy phocæ, basking on the shore,
Or sailing on the deep, delight no more.

The wanton dolphins now her senses shock,
And various Proteus with his scaly flock;
Or bloated tritons, who, with rattling sound
Of coral, shake the wat'ry world around.
Taught by experience of her past disgrace,
She shuns the converse of the finny race,
None but bright objects, her peculiar care,
Young blooming Nereids her companions are,
Sea-born, like Venus, and like Venus, fair.

If then, ye matrons, who conceive, design
A future offspring, which may grace your line :
Let not your fancy at all objects fly,
But keep strict reins upon your roving eye.
Shun ev'ry thing which shocks your sense, and view
Ingenuous looks alone of shining hue.
If for a boy with comely face you long,
See the bright god, who from Latona sprung,
Apollo, ever fair, and ever young.
Or view Alexis, whom the Mantuan swain
Pursu'd with fruitless love, and mournful strain.
But, if a progeny of female race,
With unresisted charms, and lovely grace,
Delight you more : the Paphian goddess view,
Such as the pencil of fam'd Titian drew :
Or Danae's alluring looks behold,
While genial Jove descends in liquid gold.

Or if a beauty of the modern age
Shall your attention and delight engage :
To Phyllis' portrait let your eyes incline ;
For fair she was, or such she seem'd to mine.
When her unhappy love my heart possess'd,
And scorch'd with furious flames my burning breast.

O, with what bloom, what flow'r of youth she shone !
How her cheeks blush'd a colour, all her own,
A genuine red, like roses newly blown !
What nymph with Phyllis could pretend to vie
A whiter forehead, or a livelier eye ?
Her form was faultless, and her genuine soul
Spoke in each part, and sparkl'd through the whole :
Each limb did wanton loves and graces bear ;
There lodg'd their arms, their bows and arrows there.
But oh ! on what uncertain hidden strings
Depends th' inconstant fate of human things !
That face, in which the gods might take delight,
Is now grown hideous, and forbids the sight.
With cruel scythe, inexorable time,
Mows down her youthly bloom, and beauty's prime.
Now wrinkly age begins to draw his plough
On that once-smooth, once-snowy, spacious brow.
Now, where her teeth took up their iv'ry seat,
Is all an empty space, or scene of jet.
Her head, which once with golden tresses shone,
Is silver'd o'er with hairs but thinly sown :
And now the flame, which on my marrow prey'd,
Begins to languish ; and the heat's decay'd.
Phyllis no more can now her charms employ,
But damp desire, and frights the Cyprian boy.
Deform'd, she cures the wound her beauty gave,
And she, whose eyes could kill me, now can save.
Since then the honours of her face are lost,
Shun her, ye pregnant, as a living ghost.
Lest with her sight your fancy be defil'd,
And fix her horrid image on the coming child.

Strange is the story of a swarthy dame,
Who lost, by fancy's pow'r, her spotless fame

While prostrate on the genial bed she lay,
And in her lord's embraces died away,
A naked fair, in beauty's highest bloom,
Whose lovely image chanc'd t' adorn the room,
Then met her view ; she gaz'd, just as the seed
Stamp'd its warm image on the lovely deed.
Degen'rate was the birth ; a daughter fair
Did the bright image of the picture wear ;
She rov'd o'er distant lands, wide rivers cross'd,
By winds and waves, and endless dangers toss'd,
Till an old sage, for knowledge far renown'd,
The cause of all her woe and beauty found ;
What dy'd her cheek, and how her lovely frame
From a mute figure and dead portrait came.

All bodies that the great immense compose,
From which each active, fond idea flows,
A subtle substance of loose atoms wear,
Which float and wander in the liquid air,
Though far they fly, their pow'r is still the same,
All copy'd from the substance whence they came ;
Whose lively picture they convey around,
Its taste and shape, its odour and its sound ;
Through ev'ry pore they pass, and ev'ry vein,
And stamp the image on the passive brain.
Not the bright stars, on high that nightly burn,
Do on their axes half so swiftly turn
As these, which still succeed ; then pass away,
And their strong image to the heart convey ;
The beating heart distends to give them room,
Then straight conveys them to the swelling womb ;
Where nature strives each vessel to distend,
And takes the objects which their senses lend.

Those atoms which from ugly forms arise,
Are harsh and rough, and hateful to the eyes;
They horrid spectres bear, and ghastly forms,
Thunder and earthquakes, murder, fire, and storms:
Hence thrilling horrors through the members dart,
Shake ev'ry joint, and chill the throbbing heart.
The wretched womb th' ideal fright receives,
And sad impressions on the foetus leaves :
Not boist'rous winds the tender buds that spoil,
And make wild havock with the farmer's toil,
So much can harm the fruits which deck the earth,
As these the vigour of th' expected birth.

While pleasing phantoms fill her active mind,
Let the full bride, to soft repose reclin'd,
Rest with her load ; nor too much exercise
By labour, or by active sports, devise ;
For know by thousand tender pliant strings,
The embryo infant to its mother clings :
Inhuman she, who by unbidden strife
Breaks these warm principles of promis'd life.
The sprightly dancer, thus with wanton play,
Sports while she moves a valu'd birth away.
Far from such feats let the big matron fly,
And save at once herself and progeny !

See where the lovely train, whom joy invites,
Of youths and maidens, revel in delights ;
Youths, who with swelling hearts and ardent eyes,
In peace or war alike dispute the prize ;
Maids, whose bright forms excite to soft desire,
And kindle in the heart love's gentle fire.
Here if the pregnant bride, at times, repair,
To cheer her soul, and taste the fresher air.

Let her beware, nor trust the foaming horse
Too much, nor urge too swift, the rapid course ;
Lest she, unhappy, some disaster prove,
And lose (imprudent) all the fruits of love ;
For, thus the marry'd nymph too oft' has mourn'd,
Her heedless rashness in the dust o'er-turn'd ;
Unwillingly her hidden charms display'd,
By laughing crowds, and vulgar eyes survey'd.
Oft have I seen, but never saw unmov'd
A fair-one by a thousand gazers lov'd
Besmear'd with gore and wounded with a fall
With suppliant accents, for assistance call,
Her beauty's injury deplore too late,
And mourn the sad vicissitude of fate,
Which spoil'd the charms that deck'd her blooming
face,

And kill'd the offspring of her dear embrace.
Such dangers let your breeding consort shun,
Nor, bent to win a race, destroy a son.
The spirits, at such accidents, retire ;
The blood congeals, and damps the vital fire ;
A trickling horror through the members flows
Producing barren and abortive throes.

Thrice happy she; who in refreshing bow'rs,
Passes in solitude the genial hours ;
Full of a mother's hopes who roves the fields,
And catches ev'ry sweet the season yields ;
But when rough Boreas rises to deform
The aged year, let her avoid the storm
Of warring elements, and safe retire
To her domestic hearth, and cheerful fire ;

Or sometimes if a milder day is found,
Let her with visits greet the neighbours round,
And the long evenings spend in social mirth,
Forgetful of those pains, which wait the coming birth.

Nor here neglect to weary heav'n with pray'r,
So shall thy offspring merit all its care ;
And rise to honours and to virtuous fame,
Till the soul quit the body's weaken'd frame,
And, freed from all obstructions, wing its way
To the bright regions of celestial day.

But when completely form'd, the precious load
Labours to issue from its dark abode,
With care direct the rover on its road ;
For num'rous ills attend the mother's pains,
When the too eager infant bursts its chains :
Invoke Lucina then, her aid implore,
And to the light of heav'n, its precious gift restore,
Nor let an ill-tim'd modesty prevent
The useful means, and frustrate their intent.
Let not your care a woman's aid provide ;
But let the sage physician's skill be try'd ;
His deeper knowledge shall your hopes ensure,
And by the safest way the birth procure :
But the weak sex by custom blindly led,
Oft spoil the produce of the marriage-bed ;
What needs the conscious blush o'erspread your face,
When thus the readiest method you embrace
To save yourself and all your future race ?

This danger o'er, another yet remains,
The nurse's care succeeds the mother's pains :

- When safely rescu'd from the fears of death,
In open air the child begins to breathe,
A careless nurse the infant may destroy;
Nor yet a gross or sickly one employ,
Lest the contagion to your offspring spread,
And mix the lovely stranger with the dead,
Beware that dire disease whose desp'rate course
Infects the blood, and, with resistless force,
Plants loathsome ulcers, which young beauty blight,
And pimpled sores, ungrateful to the sight :
For quick relief to the physician haste,
Ere the foul pest your offspring has disgrac'd.
Who could fair Cælia's numerous beauties tell,
Ere to this plague a sacrifice she fell ;
Or Thyrsis' charms, whom ev'ry nymph desir'd,
Those nymphs now pity whom they once admir'd ;
He, sorely scarr'd, a spectacle remains
Of ruin'd beauty to the nymphs and swains :
The dire small pox has every grace remov'd,
He dies neglected, though he liv'd belov'd.
-

Thus far the muse through her dear haunts has
stray'd,
To court instruction in the laurell'd shade :
The winged horse that through the middle space,
Soar'd o'er the subject earth and distant seas,
Now gently skims the ground, and homeward hies,
And seeks the sacred fount, where stretch'd he lies ;

Spent with the tedious course :—his sides he laves,
And washes off the foam in Pindus' waves.

Ye youths and maidens, who my song attend,
(The precepts of a poet and a friend)
To whom I dedicate these votive lays,
For whom this labour'd, lofty verse I raise,
Which after-ages shall with joy recite,
And love the strains which sing of sweet delight ;
Still may my rules your serious thoughts engage,
To rise the darlings of a future age.
'Tis true, this wicked race, these iron times,
Do ill deserve to hear my hallow'd rhymes ;
They blush not at their hapless parents shame,
A vicious spirit in a noble frame :
But not to such I sing.—Ye honest few,
Who hate these faults, and kindle at the view ;
With gen'rous anger—at your feet I lay
The fruit mature of many a well-spent day :
Pleas'd, while these sacred maxims I rehearse,
In tuneful strains of never-dying verse,
To point out beauteous forms, by heav'n design'd,
The comely dwelling of a virtuous mind ;
Who bade a former race, with fair increase,
Possess our isle, in plenty and in peace :
So may each pow'r the guardian of our land,
Who round the Almighty's throne for ever stand,
Perform his will, and wait his high command,
Avert those ills which, like a dreadful storm,
Hang louring o'er us, and our days deform ;
Restore those, halcyon days (our country's boast)
Too long, alas ! to hapless Britons lost ;

Return, fair Virtue, to our shores again,
And raise a better, happier stock of men ;
Bid discord cease, renew a lovely race,
And with fresh green our fading laurels grace !

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